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ABSTRACT

An analysis of the use of the English particle "also" in discourse is presented. First, previous analyses of "also" and of related particles "even, only" are outlined and critiqued. It is argued that these analyses draw inadequate conclusions about the particles' usage patterns and meaning. A formulation of the meaning of "also" is proposed: (1) "also" connects the element with which it associates with the element of the same category mentioned in the preceding context; and (2) "also" signals that the element with which it associates belongs to the set of elements mentioned in the preceding context (a feature or element is added). Therefore, the function of "also" is described as that of a cohesive additive, the function of which a mere linear sequentiality does not guarantee. (MSE)

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The Contextual Nature of Also

Aleksander Szwedek

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THE CONTEXTUAL NATURE OF *ALSO*

In my forthcoming paper (Szwedek, forthcoming) on *even* and *only* I point out that their description has not been satisfactory so far. Although their syntax has been discussed adequately and exhaustively, their semantic description is, at best, incomplete.

First of all, the descriptions have been based on wrong methodological grounds. The referential adverbs as Hnatowicz (1981), I think, appropriately calls them; cf. Grochowski's (1986) "particles" have so far been discussed in isolated sentences. The result, in my opinion, is that certain features ascribed (whether in the form of presuppositions or not) to the meaning of those items, belong to the context rather than to the items themselves. Thus I claimed that in (1) (Fraser's 1971 example):

(1) Even Max tried on the pants.

the part of the explication referring to other people doing the same (Fraser's b. *Other people tried on the pants;* Grochowski's a. *There are such S's which are P.)* is in fact a necessary part of the preceding context. I also suggested that the minimal context in which we can felicitously use (1) can be something like (2):

(2) John tried on the pants, Joe tried on the pants, and David tried on the pants.

(1) Even Max tried on the pants.

I concluded that "It is simply difficult to imagine that [(1)] could open a conversation between, say, Jackendoff and Fraser, unless some other people's trying on the pants had been mentioned before."

On similar grounds we can exclude from the explication the assertion itself in (1):

(3) Max tried on the pants.

i.e. Fraser's a. and Grochowski's c. (S_1 is P).

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Also Hnatowicz (1981) in her logically oriented approach follows the pattern suggested by Fraser. According to her, the meaning of *even* can be explicated in the following way:

> If *S* is a sentence containing a referential adverb *even* with one of the constituents of *S* as its scope, then *S* asserts a statement which does not contain *even* and is otherwise identical with *S* [Fraser's a.; Grochowski's c.], it logically presupposes that there is an element different from the scope of *even* [Fraser's b.; Grochowski's a.] which, when substituted for this scope in the assertion, would result in a true statement, and *S* informationally presupposes that the speaker would not expect (or would not expect the hearer to expect) the assertion to be true. (Fraser's c.; Grochowski's b.). (Hnatowicz 1981:95).

In what follows I would like to analyze the particle (Hnatowicz's 'referential adverb'; Bogusławski's (1986) 'particle of analogy') *also* along the same lines as *even* and *only*.

Although *also* is often mentioned in the linguistic literature on the problem, it has not been discussed as thoroughly as *even* and *only*. The reason may be that, as Grochowski (1986) remarks, "Particles *also* and *too* [Polish *również, także, też*] are characterized by a lower degree of semantic complexity than even." (Grochowski 1986:80; translation A.S.)

Before discussing the semantics of *also*, a few words are in order about its structural behaviour.

Syntactically, *also* behaves much in the same way as *even* and *only*, i.e. it is most often placed at M position in which case "one has the choice of focusing the main verb, another part of the predication, or the whole predication". (Quirk et al. 1985:605):

(4) John could *also* ⟨SÉE⟩ his wife from the doorway.
[*eg* as well as being able to hear her]

(5) John could *also* see ⟨his WÍFE⟩ from the doorway.
[*eg* as well as her brother]

(6) John could *also* see his wife ⟨from the DÓORway⟩.
[*eg* as well as from further inside the room]

(Quirk et al. 1985:605)

Also can also immediately precede a focused part, as in:

(7) John has seen it *also* ⟨near his back DOOR⟩.

or "follow the focused part, then carrying an intonation nucleus; and if the focused part is subject, [it] must follow it." (Quirk et al. 1985:609):

(8) John has seen it ⟨near his back DOOR⟩ ÀLSO.

(9) ⟨John⟩ ÀLSO has seen it.

At the level of information structure *also* behaves like *even*, too, in that it associates with the 'new' information in the sentence:

(10) John likes to spoil his daughter. He gave her a new doll. He (John) also gave his daughter a new BICYCLE.

(11) John likes to spoil his daughter. Last week he took her to the cinema. He (John) also gave his daughter a new BICYCLE.

where in (10) *also* associates with *bicycle* (which happens to be the only stressed (focused) element), i.e. the 'new' information, and in (11) *also* associates with *gave his daughter a new bicycle* the whole of which is the 'new' information (though only one item is stressed (focused)).

Semantically, *also* has been traditionally described as carrying the meaning of addition ('additive subjunct' — Quirk et al. 1985) in the sense that

"ADDITIVE subjuncts indicate that the utterance concerned is *additionally* true in respect of the part focused" (Quirk et al. 1985:604).

In her logically oriented approach Hnatowicz (1981) describes the meaning of *also* in terms of presuppositions in the following way:

ALSO

If *S* is a sentence containing a referential adverb *also* with one of the constituents of *S* as its scope, then *S* asserts a statement which does not contain *also* and is otherwise identical with *S*, and *S* presupposes that there is an element different from the scope of *also* which, when substituted for this scope into the assertion, would result in a true statement. (Hnatowicz 1981:95).

Similarly Grochowski (1986) describes the meaning of *also* in two parts:

„Również (także, też) S_1 jest P: Istnieją takie S-y, które są P. S_1 jest P."
Also (and its other Polish synonyms *także* and *też*) S_1 is P. There are such S's which are P. S_1 is P.

(Grochowski 1986:80; translation A.S.)

In Grochowski's account, S_1 is P is Hnatowicz's assertion (identical with S without *also*), and the first part of his explication is Hnatowicz's presupposition "that there is an element different from the scope of *also* which, when substituted for this scope in the assertion, would result in a true statement".

Strictly speaking, Grochowski's S_1 is P and Hnatowicz's assertion cannot be taken to be part of the meaning of *also*.

In my discussion of *even* and *only* (Szwedek, forthcoming) I have also expressed doubts whether Fraser's b. ('Other people tried on the pants") and Grochowski's "There are such S's which are P", can be taken to be part of the meaning of *even* on the grounds that, as I also repeat in the present paper, it is difficult to imagine that (1) could open a conversation, unless some other people's trying on the pants had been mentioned before.

I conclude that Fraser's "Other people tried on the pants" and Grochowski's "There are such S's which are P" are part of the necessary context, and not part of the meaning of *even*.

A closer inspection of the explications of *also* by Hnatowicz and Grochowski reveals that the same objections as against the account of meaning of *even* can be raised against the explication of *also*.

First, Hnatowicz's 'assertion' and Grochowski's S_1 is P can not be used in the explication of *also* since it appears on both sides of the 'equation':

Also S_1 is P: a. There are such S's which are P.
b. S_1 is P.

We could draw incorrect conclusions about the meaning of *also*: if we reduce both sides by the same constituent 'S_1 is P', we could be compelled to conclude that *also* = a. There are such S's which are P.

In effect, what is left is the referential implication: "that there is an element different from the scope of *also* which, when substituted for this scope into the assertion, would result in a true statement" (cf. a similar formulation by Grochowski: "There are such S's which are P", which also implies that there are S's which are different from S_1).

To see the possible use of such a formulation in the explication of *also*, we would have to analyze sentences with *also* in a broader context.

First of all, we should always remember that there are no sentences without a context in real speech situation (cf. L a n i n's 1977 "You can take the sentence out of the discourse but you can't take the discourse out of the mind of the speaker"). With reference to *also* this means that the minimal condition on a felicitous use of the particle is an element which it can refer to in the preceding context. It would be totally unacceptable to have, for example, (5) as an opening sentence. The minimal condition would be the assumption of the speaker that there is in his and the receiver's (in the worst case it is only the speaker's assumption) consciousness an element to which *also* can refer. Thus, if we want to claim that the interpretation of (5)

(5) John could *also* see ⟨his WIFE⟩ from the doorway.

involves a presupposition that "there is an element different from the scope of *also* which, when substituted for this scope into the assertion, would result in a true statement", or in other words as Quirk et al. add

[*eg* as well as her brother]

then in effect we are supplying the preceding context. The reverse order in Quirk et al. (with "as well as her brother" following the sentence with *also*) is only a very late surface transformation. Thus it is correct to say (I ignore the rather awkward full repetition):

(12) John could see her (?) BRÒTHER from the doorway.

(5) John could also see ⟨his WIFE⟩ from the doorway.

but not:

(5) John could also see ⟨his WIFE⟩ from the doorway.

(12) John could see her BROTHER from the doorway.

Thus, what Hnatowicz treats as a presupposition, and Grochowski as part of the meaning of *also*, is in fact the context without which (5) and other sentences with *also* would have no sense.

In a short, 9 page Prologue to the *Report of the Warren Comission*, there are 8 occurrences of *also*. None of them appears without a context to which *also* can refer.

We have to repeat again, then, that what is taken to be a presupposition or part of the meaning of *also*, is in fact the necessary context.

If, then, we can not use the assertion and presupposition to explicate the meaning of *also*, nothing is really left of the explications proposed by Hnatowicz and Grochowski.

So, what is the meaning of *also*?

First of all, as Hnatowicz correctly observes, it has a referential function, referring to something in the previous context. However, this in itself can not be the meaning of *also*. Adverbs like *also* are called 'additive subjuncts' by Quirk et al. (1985:604), and are defined as indicating "that the utterance is *additionally* true in respect of the part focused:" (Quirk et al. 1985:604).

Therefore, rather than meaning "there are such *S*'s which are *P*" or presupposing "that there is an element different from the scope of *also*", *also* indicates that an element is *added* to the element mentioned in the preceding context.

We can now suggest the following formulation of the meaning of *also*, formulation analogical to that for *even* and *only*:

a. *also* connects the element it associates with, with the element of the same category mentioned in the preceding context;

b. *also* signals that the element it associates with belongs to the set of elements mentioned in the preceding context (a feature or an element is added).

It is in a way surprising to see that these two points are identical with the first two points for *even* (cf. the same in Hnatowicz's description of *even* and *also*). This is also supported by examples in which *even* and *also* (but not *only*) can appear in the same context:

(13) People tried on the pants. Even Max tried on the pants.

(14) People tried on the pants. Also Max tried on the pants.

(15) *People tried on the pants. Only Max tried on the pants.

or

(16) John could see his brother from the doorway. He could even see his wife.

(17) John could see his brother from the doorway. He could also see his wife.

(18) *John could see his brother from the doorway. He could only see his wife.

If *also* can be defined almost as a mere addition, then a question arises as to the difference between the following two texts:

(14) a. People tried on the pants. b. Also Max tried on the pants.

(19) a. People tried on the pants. b. Max tried on the pants.

(19) feels definitely odd, although by the fact that (19b) follows (19a), (19b) should be treated as addition to (19a), the meaning we have just ascribed to *also*. And yet the 'additive subjunct' is certainly not used here without reason. One possible interpretation is to treat *also* as a weaker form of *even*, containing a certain degree of unexpectedness of Max's behaviour.

On the other hand, (19) is not really felt as addition. To the contrary, it is seen as relating two different, unrelated events, particularly in view of the repetition of the whole predicate without an apparent reason.

In connection with the cohesive function of *also* de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) say that there is no motive to place 'and', 'also', 'in addition to', etc. between all clauses or sentences; in fact, such a practice renders the text dull except for occasional special effects (cf. the device of "polysyndeton" in classical rhetoric). The use of such junctives is more likely when interdependency is not obvious and should be stressed." (de Beaugrande and Dressler 1981:72).

Thus the function of *also* can be in short described as cohesive additive, the function which a mere linear sequentiality does not guarantee.

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